

SUB-CABINET ON SENIOR VITAL LIVING
Meeting Summary Notes
Tuesday, September 28, 2010

Department Directors

Adams, Bruce
Adler, Joseph
Ahluwalia, Uma
Albornoz, Gabriel
Emanuele, Steve
Hamilton, Parker
Hartman, Ken
Lacefield, Patrick
Matthews, Catherine
Nelson, Rick
Nurmi, Joy

Rodriguez, Reemberto
Vaughan-Prather, Judith

Staff

Anderson, Mary
Barrow, Joy
Biggins, Carolyn
Callaway, Joe
Feinberg, Beryl
Goodwin, Bill
Heiney-Gonzalez, Joe
Heyman, Austin

Huggins, Gloria
Kaufmann, Barbara
Kenney, John
Korona, Luann
Roshdieh, Al
Saddi, Odile
Short, Chuck
Smith, Charles
Stroman, Dana
Vines, Ralph

Guest Speaker

Isiah Leggett

Guests

Kilder, Dolly-County Council
Kreger, Alan
Marks, Leslie
Welles, Judith
Woodall, Barbara

COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMENTS:

County Executive Isiah Leggett expressed appreciation to the members of the Senior Subcabinet, staff and community advocates for their work and efforts since the cabinet was convened in March of 2008.

Mr. Leggett affirmed his commitment to the original design of the Senior Summit with the eight key areas and workgroups. He stated the Subcabinet should move forward with transparency of what can and cannot be accomplished because of economic constraints. He acknowledged challenges will at times be difficult, and that we must remember:

1. We do not have a choice—we must make it work
2. We must be optimistic that the economy will change and the economic limitations will not continue
3. We must look beyond the challenges and see the successes

Mr. Leggett shared that while serving on the County Council there was an expensive request to enlarge and illuminate road signs. At the time, he wondered why this was such a concern. Now as the years have passed and he is older, he appreciates the large illuminated road signs.

Mr. Leggett highlighted the Bethesda Village Blueprint concept to help villages assist seniors age in place as an example of what is being accomplished. This no-cost effort was accomplished through coordination with the Regional Service Center, existing organizations and the community, specially the efforts of volunteer Leslie Marks.

Leslie Marks commented that the Bethesda Village Blueprint How-To Manual is available online. This was acknowledged as another challenge because many seniors do not have computers or computer training. Mr. Leggett indicated his desire to help seniors with computer access and computer training to boost up the members of seniors communicating and using on-line services. Ms. Marks added that grant funds would be used to get additional hard copies of the How-To Manual printed.

Mr. Leggett concluded by again thanking the group for their hard work and expressing that there has been progress in housing and transportation. He also reiterated that he is committed to the work of the Senior Subcabinet and that it is high on his agenda.

WORKGROUP REPORTS:

- Communication and Outreach

Patrick Lacefield reported that the workgroup is working to utilize current resources by publicizing the Seniors' Today Program with DVDs and weblinks. There is also an effort to increase the airing of Seniors' Today on the County Cable channel. Updating the website is another project. Patrick also noted that MC311 is receiving 50,000 telephone calls and the majority of the requests are for information not services. The next Communication and Outreach meeting is scheduled in October.

Barbara Woodall reported that the Commission on Aging Vital Living Committee has finalized a 15-page Guide to Vital Living in Montgomery County. Their next project is to "Adopt a Library." This project will consist of working with a librarian to establish a space or a senior area focused on senior information consisting of resources for employment, transportation guides, the Living and Thriving brochure, etc. The Vital Living Committee would like to have an on-line copy of the Guide to Vital Living in Montgomery County.

- Housing and Zoning

Rick Nelson reported that housing challenges for seniors have grown as a result of the economic downturn. Some of the challenges are that senior residents are not receiving COLAs in Social Security payments but are still getting rent increases. Also, there is a need for affordable assisted living facilities to bridge the gap between living at home and going into a nursing home. Uma Ahluwalia pointed out that more coordination of policy may be needed with Park and Planning. There was some interest around this issue.

Charles Smith reported on a seminar he attended the prior week at which Dr. Steven Golant had been a featured speaker. Dr. Golant expressed the opinion that "aging in place" has been interpreted and implemented in a manner that is not always to the benefit of seniors or the community. Dr. Golant stressed that it is important to examine honestly both the pro's and con's of aging in place. Negative aspects can include: social isolation, difficulty in maintaining a single family home, safety, and increased burden on the part of family caregivers. Also noted by Dr. Golant was that older adults on fixed incomes often do not invest money in maintaining their property, which can negatively impact the property value of other homes in the neighborhood, and that seniors aging in place limit available housing for younger families entering the county. Other members of the Subcabinet concurred that these issues reinforce the need to have greater coordination of the different groups working on housing issues in the county.

- Transportation

Carolyn Biggins announced that the at-a-glance transportation guide was completed by the Transportation workgroup and a limited supply has been printed due to fiscal constraints. The guide is on the Senior Website.

- Public Safety

Ralph Vines reported that Police, Fire and Consumer Protection continue to work together. They have completed a tri-fold pamphlet on Fall Prevention. Other projects are Project Lifesaver, the Home Community Survey, and the Senior Movie. The Home and Community Survey is a form that has been

updated to add smoke detectors and other items to ensure seniors are safe in the homes. The Senior Movie is still well attended and gives the Police Department an opportunity to conduct a 15-minute presentation to educate seniors and answer questions they may have.

Emergency Preparedness continues to be a challenge. Assisted Living facilities are mandated by law to have an emergency plan for residents. However, Senior Buildings and Senior Group Homes are not. Uma noted the need for emergency preparedness for seniors, especially in light of the problems of the February snowfall when many lost electricity. There were problems for those needing oxygen or had medicine in refrigerators.

On October 21 at 2:00 p.m., there will be a public hearing with Pepco to address outages during storms.

New Development: Uma contacted Chris Voss, Director of the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security and he will join the Senior Subcabinet.

The Task Force on Hoarding Behavior addresses the issue of hoarding in Montgomery County. Hoarding creates a public safety and quality of life issues for the residents and their pets (hoarding animals is common). The task force is a collaboration of county staff and community providers.

A request was made that the county coordinate with municipalities on senior issues. Perhaps a staff member could attend monthly meetings to inform residents and providers of county programs and services. Chuck Short responded that Kathleen Boucher, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer and/or Regional Service Coordinator Directors could fulfill this role.

- Health and Wellness

Gabe Alborno reported that the Health and Wellness Advisory workgroup did not meet this summer and is meeting on October 28. One project they are working on is the Senior Fit projects with Suburban Hospital. Another project is the Back to Recreation event where the greatest attendance was by seniors. The group focused on Fall Prevention in September with numerous events throughout the county, tri-fold pamphlet and a kick off event.

The County will hold the second Senior Olympics, which is an event of competitive games encouraging physical activities. This is a qualifying year and winning Olympians will qualify to participate in the National Senior Olympics at Stanford University.

- Employment

The Employment workgroup is developing a one-page resource of AARP employment opportunities and will distribute the document at Montgomery Works and all the other facilities with which they partner or contract. A multigenerational workforce conference will be held in the spring.

Uma noted the success of the JCA Job Fair in terms of participation but requested statistics regarding actual job placements.

- Civic and Social Engagement

Bruce Adams reported that a number of staff went to the Governor's Summit on Civic Engagement on Thursday, September 16. The event was inspiring stressing the need to turn aspiration into action—tapping into the talent and skill base provided by residents especially seniors and encouraging volunteerism.

- Home and Community Based Supports

Current workgroup projects and accomplishments are:

- Identifying non-profit service delivery and models
- Release of the Bethesda Village Blueprint—number of workgroup members help to edit the document
- On October 20 there will be an Age-friendly Communities Event with Jay Kenney and Irene Hodgkins as presenters
- Collaboration between Civic and Social Engagement and Home and Community Based Support workgroups to look at other models for providing home supports

Challenges included engaging members and getting them to contribute to the work process. Many share ideas and give advice but leave actual work to staff.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Planning
2. Coordination with municipalities
3. Emergency Preparedness

COUNTYSTAT

Prepare outcomes for CountyStat spring session. Suggestions given:

- As a baseline for performance measures, research what other departments already report to CountyStat and use these measures where appropriate.
- Research Park and Planning to see what outcomes/data already exists

ASSIGNMENT: Each workgroup was charged with proposing one or two measurable outcomes and to send data to Jay and Gloria Huggins one week before next meeting. The data will be circulated before the meeting and the Senior Subcabinet will discuss data at the November meeting.

Next meeting will be scheduled late November (Now set for November 30th at 1:00 p.m.)

Adjournment